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# LEVERAGING CSR TO MEET MILLENNIALS EXPECTATIONS

D N Venkatesh<sup>1\*</sup>

\*Corresponding Author: **D N Venkatesh**, ✉ venkateshdn@gim.ac.in

This paper captures brings in a holistic perspective towards CSR in terms of History and Evolution of CSR, its progress of over years, Chronology of Initiatives taken up Government, current socio economic issues faced by India, CSR approach adopted by various organizations. Organizations have challenges in engaging millennials and retaining them, as they look for continuous and meaningful action. It is here the CSR comes to the fore and presents an interesting opportunity to organization. The paper identifies the opportunity for organizations to leverage CSR to meet the expectations of the millennials.

**Keywords:** Corporate social responsibility, Talent management, Millennials, Employee expectations

## INTRODUCTION

CSR helps an organization to contribute back to the community that it operates in and gets its profits and in the process it helps to strengthen the corporate brand equity among the stakeholders. CSR from the above definition can be interpreted as “holistic initiative that helps an organization to respond to the community in which it operates and support the society at large”, “helps to broaden the definition of stakeholders to include the community/society that it does business in as well and thus become a responsible corporate citizen” & “Philanthropy is just a part of CSR and CSR has multiple facets that address various societal needs like environment, health care, education, etc”.

CSR in India is progressing from institutional building in the areas like education, research and

culture to more societally direct factors such as Child Nutrition, Women Welfare. The real-movement towards CSR came through the efforts of Government of India, who during the early 2000s realized that the Industry in the country has come up the maturity curve and as responsible corporate citizens, they should partner with the government in the area of social development. The government initially for few years made it as voluntary and made it legally obligatory with Companies Bill of 2013. Post the CSR Bill, there has been a mixed scenario in the implementation of CSR by organization in India.

CSR in India has evolved over the years and organizations are exploring methods to integrate it with various facets such as organizational/ employer branding, employee engagement, talent management and retention. In addition,

<sup>1</sup> Professor, OB & HR Area, Goa Institute of Management, Poriem, Sattari, Sanquelim, Goa 403505, India.

organizations are continuously looking for ways to connect and engage with millennials, who look for continuous and meaningful challenges.

The Generation that is born after 1980 and before 2000, are termed as millennials.

They are also termed as Boomrang Generation in this generation, they are % of young adults who are educated is higher than previous generations. They are born and brought up in environment of plenty. The key traits of them are a) multi-tasking, b) connected, c) Tech savvy d) Instant Gratification and recognition, e) worklife balance and flexibility, f) collaboration, and g) flexibility.

These characteristics make them unique and present challenging context to the HR and Business Managers at work place. It is here that this research paper aims to study the common

ground and opportunities for the managers to leverage on CSR initiatives to connect and engage with millennials.

Price Waterhouse Coopers(PWC) in their 14<sup>th</sup> Annual CEO Survey has identified the expectations.

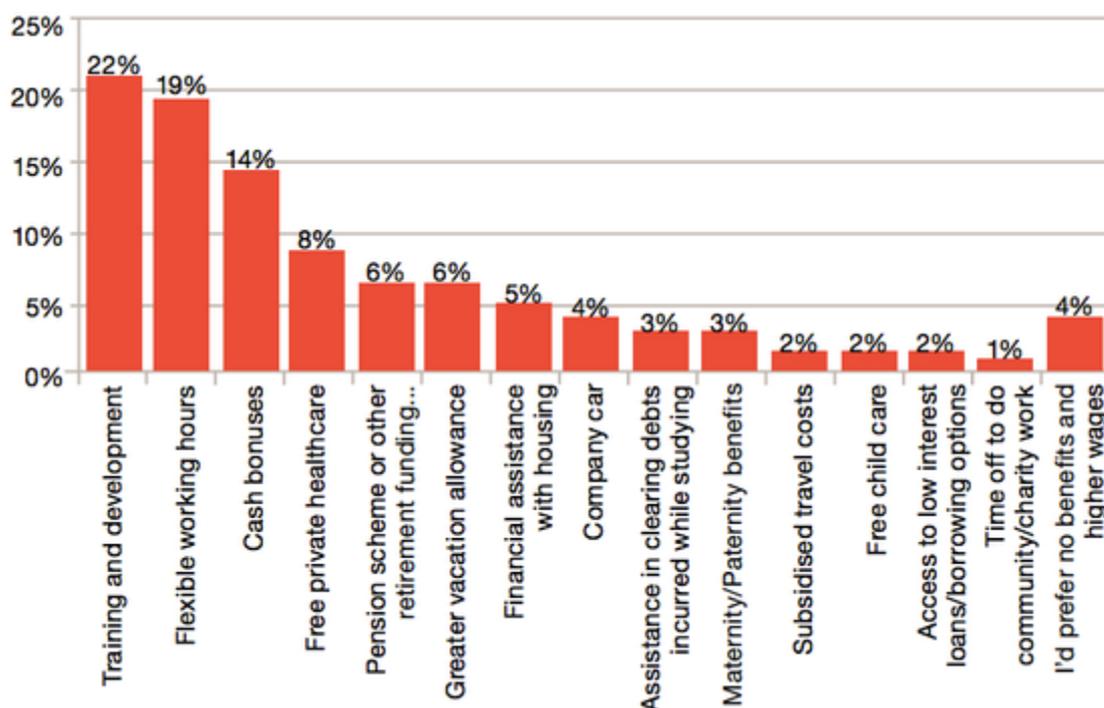
The expectations of millennials and the interpretation is captured below (Table 1):

## RESEARCH OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

The researcher proposes to study the following questions:

1. Understand the context of CSR for corporate India.
2. Study the unique traits of Millennials.
3. Identify the ways in which organizations can

**Figure 1: Which Three Benefits Would You Most Value from an Employer? % Ranking Each 1<sup>st</sup> Place**



Source: PWC 14<sup>th</sup> Annual CEO Survey

<b>Table 1: The Expectations of Millennials and the Interpretation</b>	
<b>Expectations/Traits</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>
Motivated by meaning	The meaning that they look for is a) sharing of gifts, b) Makin an impact on the lives of others & c) living the desired quality of life. The meaning in the job is a fundamental factor for the millennials.
Challenge hierarchical structures	They aren't afraid of sharing their views, as they believe that best solution will come by listening to views of all. They prefer a cross functional way of working across ranks and just blindly follow the instructions coming from the top.
Relationship with boss	They look at their boss more as a friend and mentor and not purely from a reporting relationship perspective.
Tech savvy	Being digital natives, they are able to adapt to technology easily. They believe social networks are an integral part of life and not as a distraction.
Open to change	They are able to see the changing landscape and the consequent need for change. As a result they not only adapt to change but champion it as well.
Task oriented and not time oriented	They do not work based on time clock, but from the perspective of completion of task
Hunger for learning	They are eager to learn new skills and technology. They are motivated to work when the importance of the task is explained to them. They no longer rely on the formal systems to learn, but through external sources (websites/social networks).
Crave for constant feedback	They like to hear on the real-time feedback from their mangers and not wait for mid or annual reviews. Feedback helps them to correct and perform better.

Table 1: (Cont.)

Want recognition	They want recognition for their good work, not from self-centred perspective, but the implication of future rewards and career progression.
Fun @ workplace	They expect fun to break monotony and more importantly it gives an opportunity to bond with their team and get creative ideas though such bonding.

leverage CSR to engage/connect with millennials and meet their expectations.

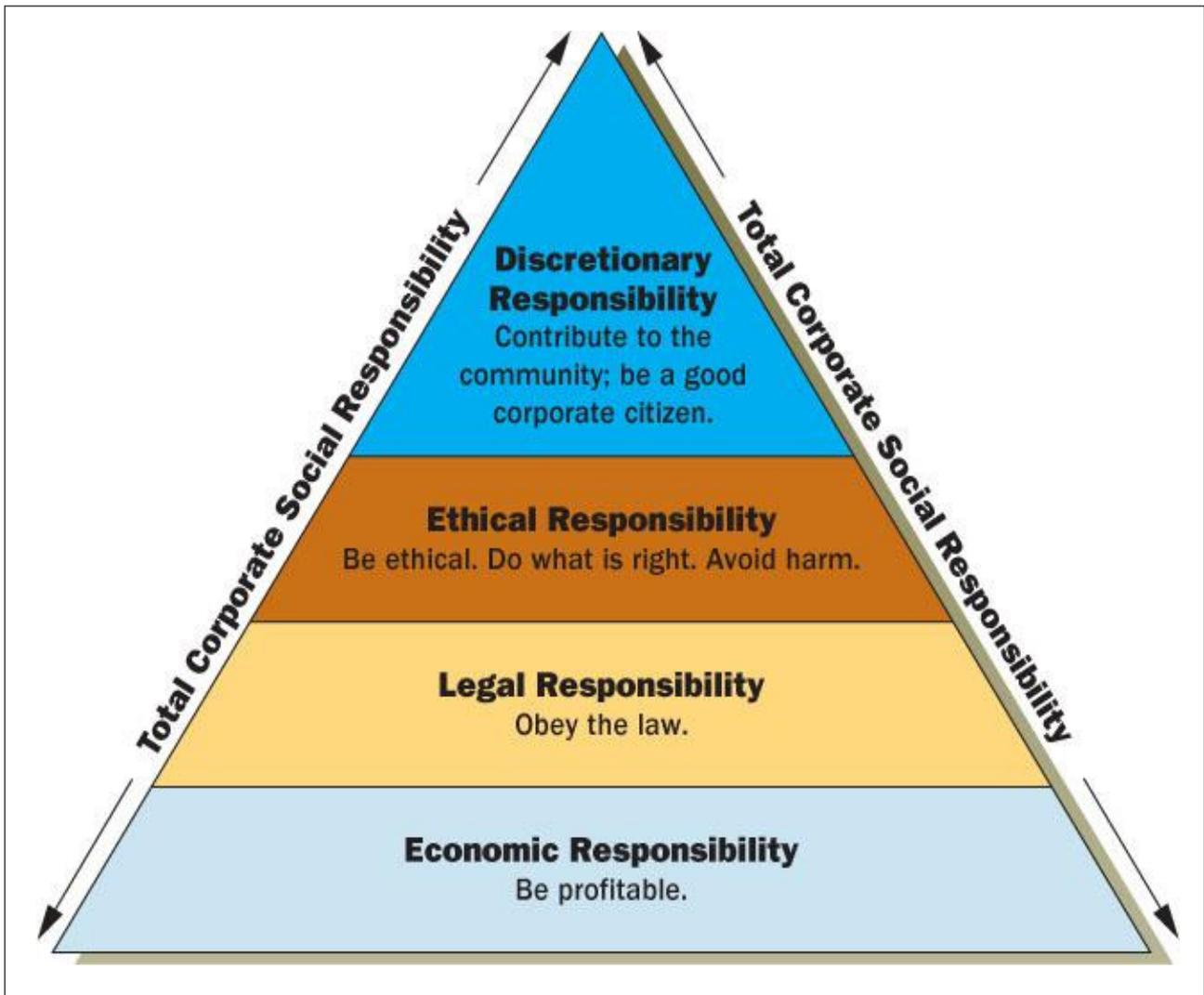
The research methodology proposed for the study is to collect the data through secondary data sources like various reports available online and the details of CSR initiatives listed in online domain by the organizations, as a part of their corporate governance requirements. The sampling methodology adopted for the study was random sampling.

## LITERATURE SURVEY

### Corporate Social Responsibility

The evolution of CSR in India can be categorized into four models, i.e., the ethical (Gandhian) model; the statist (Nehruvian) model; 3. The liberal (Friedman) model and 4. The stakeholder (Freeman) model (Kumar *et al.*, 2001; and Balasubramanian *et al.*, 2005). Carroll (1991) had designed the model for CSR that provides the holistic perspective of CSR:

Windsor (2001), had studied future of CSR and its impact on the business in the long run. Using Carroll's model, he identified 3 alternatives for CSR, i.e., conception of responsibility, global corporate citizenship, stakeholder management practices. Nigel Sarbutts (2003) studies the impact of CSR on SME's and identified that they



could minimize or mitigate risk by leveraging CSR. Moon (2004) in his research paper identified that Government has a major role in driving CSR in any country. Further he identified the drivers of CSR, i.e., Reputation of Business, Existence and identify of the corporation and more importantly the employee involvement and knowledge. Idowu (2007) after studying 20 companies in UK that CSR has become integral part of ethics agenda of an organization and is mandatorily to be reported by the organizations. Trwoniak (2009) based on his research conducted in Australia is increasingly gaining significance. Shah Bhaskar (2010) based on his

case study on CSR at BPCL has identified that carried out a number of CSR initiatives to connect with and serve the community/society. Mc William and Seigal (2010) in their research have identified that CSR helps in improving brand equity of the organization. Agunis (2012) in his research presented a framework for CSR. Bhattacharyya and Chaturvedi (2012), in their research had predicted that CSR Bill in India will force a lot of organization to look at CSR activities actively.

Action Learning (AL) is an approach that is used to identify solutions to real problems,

implement the solutions and reflect on the results. The factors involved in action learning are: a) real problem that is critical and complex, b) diverse problem-solving, c) process that promotes curiosity, inquiry and reflection, d) skills to convert plans into action and e) attitude to learn. Action learning as a concept was originally developed by Reg Revans (1982). AL has applications in developing individual leadership and team problem solving skills.

Initially organizations were selecting CSR areas, based on parameters like reference of promoters, convenience, preferences of persons responsible CSR and so on. The Companies Act (2013) can be described as a landmark in the history of India CSR and marks

the beginning of new era. The criterion for applicability of CSR Clause along with pertinent information like Role of board toward CSR, Guidelines about CSR Committee have been indicated as below (Table 2):

The total quantum of funds from all organizations, who are responsible as per the bill is INR 20,000 Crore and is bound to grow progressively over the years with the growth in Industry and country's economic development. The parameters on the basis of which organization are identifying the CSR priority areas include, Socio-economic conditions in the environment in which it operates; Alignment to Organization's Core Operation and Corporate Philosophy; Organizational connect with community and Branding (direct and indirect), employer branding with existing and prospective employees, etc.

The current focus areas for CSR initiatives by Indian organizations include Health, Education, Livelihood, Poverty alleviation, Environment, Water, Housing and Energy (including renewal energy). Based on the comparative study of the 24 companies, it was found that while some companies chose to narrow their focus on a few thematic areas, others took a broader view and undertook a larger scope of areas to focus on. Out of 24 case studies that were analysed, it was found that there were as many as 16 corporates focusing on 3-5 thematic areas. A recently carried research indicates the following (Table 3):

Venkatesh (2016) in his research has identified that CSR is being leveraged by organizations both for organizational and employer branding purposes. Venkatesh (2016) has identified that CSR is being used by for connecting with employee and is looked at being instrumental in employee retention.

<b>Table 2: Guidelines Regarding CSR in Companies Act (2013)</b>	
<b>Provisions of the CSR Bill</b>	<b>Details</b>
Networth/Turnover/Net Profit	Net worth of INR 500 crore or more Turnover of INR 1000 crore or more Net Profit of INR 5 Crore or more and above
% of Profits to CSR Contribution	Every year atleast 2% of average profits made during the last three financial years be allocated towards CSR activities
Purposes of CSR Funds	Poverty Alleviation/Education/Girl Child and Women Welfare/Disease Mitigation/Employability Skills Training/Social Infrastructure, etc.
Role of Board of Directors	Approve CSR Policy and Annual Report/Oversee implementation of CSR activities
Execution of CSR Activity	The company can plan and execute activities independently or through an NGO
CSR Committee	To have atleast 3 or more directors of which one has to be an independent director. The composition of CSR committee is to be disclosed in the annual report.
Purpose of CSR Committee	The CSR Committee is to formulate and recommend the CSR policy and annual expenditure to the board of directors for approval

**Table 3: Organizational Approaches Towards CSR Activities**

Dimension	Finding (s)
Well Structured Foundation	In case of 37% corporates, the CSR initiative is being implemented through a well-structured separated Foundation.
Separate CSR Department	Among 58% corporates there is a separate CSR department that takes care of the activities to be implemented.
Partnerships	The importance of building strong public-private partnerships as well as working closely with NGOs as implementation partners is being increasingly realised by corporates.
Stake-holder Relationship Management	Stakeholder engagement has become one of the important aspects of CSR practices. The list of stakeholders impacting the CSR initiatives include employees, neighbouring community and general public. Neighbouring community refers to the people in catchment area of corporate who have a direct effect of business on them.
Sustainability Reporting	Organizations as step towards transparency and accountability are reporting in their annual report about the social, environmental and economic impact of its activities including CSR activities.

**Millennials**

Singh *et al.* (2012) identified that millennials are comfortable with change, have a questioning, challenge and judging attitude. They have greater drive and demand a challenging work environment. Based on the research on Meaning of Work Place (MoWP) have identified that factors that millennials look for include: a) freedom to take initiative, experiment and express views, b) Performance based recognition, c) equity and fairness and d) learning and development opportunities.

Gavert *et al.* (2015) identified the top three factors values at work place by millennials: a) training and development, b) flexible work hours and c) cash bonuses. The factors used by

millennials to assess the success of their career are: a) meaningful work, b) high pay, c) sense of accomplishment, d) challenging work, e) high level of self-expression and f) high level of responsibility.

Sharon (2015) has identified the: a) challenges (low job market and a lot of college loan debt), b) strengths (digital *natives*), Mind-set and Attitudes (traits include entitled, optimistic, civic minded, close parental involvement, values work-life balance, impatient, multitasking, and team oriented) and c) Non-Profit Engagement. In this area the suggested approaches to engage them include i) allowing them to take leadership roles in such initiatives, ii) allow them to access information on how non-profit organization raises and spends the funds, iii) engagements with social enterprises to help them to understand and contribute to the activities of the non-profit organizations and iv) provide opportunity to millennials to develop and execute strategies to address challenges faced by non-profits.

Marija and Milica (2016) have studied the criteria basis which millennials chose their employers. the factors influencing them are i) Opportunities for learning, ii) Opportunities for advancement, iii) Challenging assignments, iv) Working environment (atmosphere at the workplace, collaboration, recreation opportunities), v) Good Working conditions (Workinghours, work-life balance, etc.), vi) Team Spirit, vii) Compensation, viii) Social responsibility, ix) International company/prestige, x) Organization’s mission and xi) Springboard.

Costello *et al.* (2016) in their comparative study of nine organizations, identified that no generational difference in terms of how individuals prefer to be led or to lead. Organization have to

<b>Table 4: Expectations of Millennials from Workplace</b>	
<b>Expectations</b>	<b>Description</b>
Work hours and “face time”	They want clear view of the work hours and defined. They expect an opportunity to present their contributions to the decision makers and for the purpose want the Face Time.
Work like balance	They detest the 24/7 work culture and want a clear balance between work and personal lives.
Disregard stereotypes	They do not like to be stereotyped and want their managers to understand them.
Business savvy	The have the capability to quickly assess the business environment and are very strategic in planning for their careers.
Career development	They expect a clear and defined career path and are keen to know what education and training will them in realizing the career dreams.
Give them a voice	They want the managers/organization listen to their views. They want flexibility to choose the projects/assignments that they would like to work upon.
Nurture teamwork	They like to work in teams in relation to individual assignments. Further they like open spaces at workplace in contract to cubicles.
Tech savvy	The generation is exposed to technology since early childhood and hence have a comfort to technology in contrast to previous generations.

adopt a strategic approach towards the areas of (1) co-worker interaction, (2) flexibility, (3) hands-off leadership style, and (4) food. Employees value the quality of co-workers they work. They value flexibility at work place, as a key influencing factor. A managerial style that facilitates employee empowerment is motivational factor. The quality of food and extent of subsidy provided is a major motivational factor for the generation.

Russel and Angela (2017) in their research have identified that millennials are different from the previous generation. They have analysed the perspective on five factors, i.e., Basic, safety,

Belonging, Eg-Status and Self-Actualization. The results indicated that the scores for belonging are higher. Further they are more positive and collaborative than previous generations. An interesting insight being that the score for safety is low, which indicates that they are open to change jobs in search of leisure and satisfying work environment.

Drogan (2016) identified that millennials bring in energy, passion and purpose in life to the workplace. They have strong need to succeed in life. Fenkel (2016) identified the expectations of millennials from the work place (Table 4):

John (2017) has studied the financial goals of millennials and has identified their differential attitude towards home and vehicle ownership have helped them transition to a “sharing economy”. They begin digital natives have different orientation towards shopping, and they shop online first to compare, before they make up their minds (2016). Kalapathi (2017) has studied the ways through HCL has engaged. The organization has provided forum for the Intrapreneurs to ideate and execute them.

**CSR Initiatives of Sampled Organization**

The organizational culture and the CSR initiatives by various organizations is tabulated along with cultural dimensions (Table 5):

**RESEARCH FINDINGS**

Most of organizations have initiatives steps for CSR implementation from a compliance perspective due to CSR clause in company law. Organizations who have strong corporate values have undertaken CSR initiative even before CSR became legal requirement.

The expectations of millennials from workplace are contrasting from those of the earlier

**Table 5: CSR Approaches of Studied Organizations**

Name of the Organization	CSR Approach/Initiatives
HSBC	The talent framework for HiPOs is integrated with the CSR initiatives of the bank. The HiPOs are provided with an opportunity to design and execute CSR projects in the priority areas of the bank. The opportunity is provided to HiPOs to groom their leadership and team building skills. Also it gives an opportunity for the HiPOs to have visibility with the top management.
Standard chartered Bank	The bank has a policy of that every employee of the bank spends 3 working days for the cause of community. The priority areas of community development are chosen by the senior leadership.
Deloitte	It has the policy that employee of the organization spend specified number of days collectively to the community cause.
Microsoft	Microsoft As a global leader in technology, it has an opportunity and a responsibility to apply its expertise in software to helping people, particularly people in underserved communities. Through monetary grants, software and curriculum donations, technology solutions, and employee volunteer hours, Microsoft supports programs and organisations that address the needs of communities worldwide. It is partnering with governments, NGOs in the area of developing technology skills in the community, through cash grants, software donations and specialized curriculum.
IBM	Has long history of supporting non-profit organisations around the world, IBM has discovered that its noncash contributions are often valued even more highly than cash grants. With the conviction that small businesses are the growth engines of nearly every economy, IBM launched an innovative philanthropic program in July 2007 that fully leverages the company's distinctive technical expertise: the SME Toolkit. The heart of the SME Toolkit project is a Web site that contains free software, business templates, training documents, and other resources designed to assist small businesses in emerging markets. To bring this project to fruition, IBM collaborated with the non-profit International Finance Corporation (IFC). Additional partner organisations in the 22 countries hosting Toolkit Web sites provide users with local support, increasing the probability that those small businesses will thrive.

**Table 5: xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx**

Lupin Laboratories	It has started a project for providing sustainable development in 154 villages across Rajasthan. The scheme instead of providing for piece-meal assistance that does not lead to effective alleviation of poverty or adequate development is designed as a holistic action plan that includes an Agricultural Income Generation Scheme, land cultivation and fruit plantation programs, fodder preservation schemes, sericulture and water-recycling programs, establishment of medical and educational centers, adult literacy programs and credit schemes.
TCS	TCS has set up a fully-equipped computer training laboratory for children from the Society for the Welfare of the Physically Handicapped and Research Centre, in Pune for imparting basic computer knowledge. The employee take initiative and opt to be trainers at these centers.
NIIT	NIIT has launched a highly popular 'hole-in-the-wall' scheme where it places a computer on a public wall in urban and rural areas so that neighbourhood children can learn computer basics using the play-way method.
CISCO	The areas of focus for its CSR are: a) Environmental sustainability, b) Governance and Ethics, c) People Development and d) Social Investment. Has been funding mid-day meal program with annual cash grant of INR 5 crore in the city of Bangalore.

generations. The key motivational factors for them are: a) learning and development opportunities, b) meaningful work, c) facetime and d) corporate social responsibility. All the above factors are interlinked and can be addressed by involving millennials in the CSR initiatives/projects. There is a limitation to which job can be designed to bring in variety and learning opportunity. In the case of CSR projects, the organization can provide challenges that are experienced by employees before. In contrast to delivering on the job in a predictable environment, the CSR projects offer a complete contrast. The challenges are not predictable and are not experienced by employees

before. These projects offer action learning opportunities and help in developing leadership and team building skills among employees.

Involvement in CSR projects provides opportunities to express their ideas and contribute to the execution of the projects. It gives an opportunity for employees to interface with senior leadership of the organization.

CSR initiatives offer an excellent opportunity to connect and engage the millennials and their expectations are met/fulfilled. Organizations have realized this opportunity and are involving millennials in design and execution of CSR initiatives.

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**Hyderabad, INDIA. Ph: +91-09441351700, 09059645577**

**E-mail: editorijmrbs@gmail.com or editor@ijmrbs.com**

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